

For **upland and beneficial use sites**, the following resources will be described:

- General setting and land uses and zoning
- Soils, vegetation
- Water resources (surface and ground)
- Biota (wetlands, aquatic life, wildlife, endangered species)
- Historic and archaeological resources
- Socioeconomic resources
- Human uses.

The analyses will be supported with graphic output from the geographic information system (GIS) database for the region.

Environmental and Socioeconomic Consequences

The impact analyses will be highly analytical and in depth, based on a thorough review of the scientific literature and studies both through research and data collected by the Disposal Area Monitoring System (DAMOS) program and the field efforts, and through studies and current research. The analyses will be based on the site selection (228.5 and 228.6) and impact criteria (228.10) in the MPRSA and, as applicable, Section 404(b)(1) guidelines and other pertinent federal and state laws and regulations. Any applicable models will be used to quantify impacts as much as possible.

For each type of disposal method and candidate sites (open water, beneficial, upland and treatment technologies) the temporary, short-term and long-term direct, indirect and cumulative effects will be assessed, applying the same categories described for the affected environment.

Compliance/Consistency with Environmental Laws, Regulations and Programs

For the preferred disposal alternative, the appropriate federal, state and local environmental laws,

regulations and programs will be reviewed, including the following:

- Clean Water Act , Section 404 (b)(1) guidelines
- MPRSA site selection criteria
- Coastal Zone Management Act (for Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island, if applicable)
- Endangered Species Act
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
- National Historic Preservation Act
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- Clean Air Act
- Appropriate Federal Executive Orders and Memorandums
- Appropriate state or regional comprehensive conservation and management plans.

Preparation of the Draft and Final EIS

The above-described analyses will be presented in a Draft EIS and distributed for public review and comment as required by NEPA. Following a public meeting and review, all comments will be considered, and a response to comments will be prepared. A Final EIS will be prepared based on the comments received on the Draft EIS.

Development of Draft and Final Site Monitoring and Management Plans (SMMP)

For any open water site proposed for designation, a draft and final Site Monitoring and Management Plan (SMMP) will be prepared as required under Sections 102 (c)(3) of the MPRSA. The SMMP(s) will be prepared as stand-alone document(s). Summaries of the plan(s) will be included in the EIS.

Record of Decision and Final Rulemaking

The Record of Decision (ROD) will be published in the Federal Register along with the Final Rulemaking.

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LONG ISLAND SOUND DREDGED MATERIAL DISPOSAL EIS EIS Work Plan and Process

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) are preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will consider the potential designation of one or more dredged material disposal site(s) in the waters of Long Island Sound (LIS). This proposed action is required under Section 102 (c) of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act (MPRSA) and 40 CFR 230.80 of the regulations of the EPA under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). The EIS will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (40 CFR 1500 et. seq.).

Dredged material has been disposed of at the existing sites known as the Western Long Island Sound (WLIS), the Central Long Island Sound (CLIS), the Cornfield Shoals (CSDS), and the New London Disposal (NLDS) sites pursuant to programmatic and site designation EIS's released by the Corps in 1982 and 1991. This site-designation EIS will provide the information needed for EPA's decision on whether one or more dredged material disposal sites will be designated under the MPRSA and identified in advance under the CWA. The EIS will include analyses applying the five general and eleven specific site selection criteria for designating ocean disposal sites presented in 40 CFR Parts 228.5 and 228.6 and the CWA Section 404(b)(1) guidelines. In addition, the impact criteria in 40 CFR 228.10 will be used to assess impacts of the current use of the existing sites and alternative open water sites.

WHAT'S IN THE EIS

An EIS provides information on the effects of the proposed action and alternatives on environmental and

socioeconomic resources. This enables the decisionmaker (in this case, the EPA) to make an informed decision as required by NEPA. To arrive at a decision on site designation, the following information will be included in the EIS:

- The purpose and need for designation of one or more dredged material disposal site(s) in the waters of LIS
- A description and evaluation of alternatives to disposal of dredged material at the existing open water sites
- A description of the affected environment, including the general setting of LIS and for each site evaluated
- An assessment of the environmental and socio-economic effects, including direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of alternatives to dredged material disposal at the existing open water sites
- A ranking of the disposal site alternatives
- A review of the proposed action's compliance/consistency with environmental laws, regulations and programs
- Site management and monitoring plans for open water sites
- A summary of the EIS public involvement process.

WORK PLAN

The Work Plan includes tasks to be conducted before the EIS document is prepared. These tasks are listed below. Many already have been initiated.

- Public involvement plan preparation and implementation
- Dredging needs inventory
- Identification of alternatives
- Alternative site screening process

- The boundaries of the study area (called the Zone of Siting Feasibility, or the ZSF)
- Data review to identify gaps and initiation of a field program to collect data needed to characterize the existing environment within the ZSF.
- Preparation and distribution of the document for public review and comments, first as a draft and then as a final
- Record of Decision (ROD) and a Final Rulemaking on the decision.

These steps are further described below.

Public Involvement Plan

The public involvement activities have begun on this EIS. A Notice of Intent announcing the EIS process was published in the Federal Register on June 3, 1999. Three public scoping meetings were held in June 1999 in Stony Brook, NY and Groton and Stamford, CT. A report titled "Long Island Sound Site Designation, Environmental Impact Statement: Summary of Scoping Meetings" provides an overview of the comments and issues presented at the meetings. Public workshops were also held in Port Jefferson, NY and Stratford, CT in October 1999. Four fact sheets (October 1999) were produced on the topic areas titled as follows:

- Dredging Needs and Alternatives
- Data Review and Recommendations
- Site Screening Process
- Evaluation Factors for Site Screening.

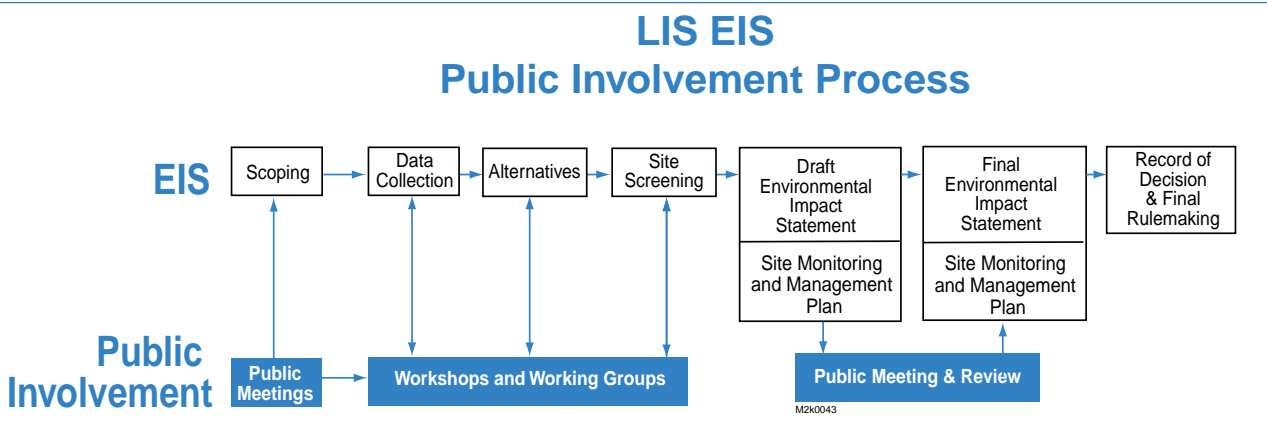
These topics were the focus of small group discussions to get public input on these issues. Comments provided at those workshops are summarized in a report titled "October 1999 Workshop Proceedings". The October series of

fact sheets are available for downloading at EPA's LIS Web Site: www.epa.gov/region01/eco/lisdreg/.

At the workshops scheduled for April 2000 in Port Jefferson, NY and Groton, CT, the public is invited to learn more about the specific plans for the EIS and to provide comments and suggestions as the Work Plan goes forward. The Work Plan is a flexible, evolving document that will be continually modified and detailed as the EIS progresses. The Work Plan is available on the EPA's LIS Web Site.

The public is invited to actively participate in the preparation of the EIS as well to provide review and comment at critical points during the process. Depending on individuals' time constraints and degree of interest in specific topics, there are varying levels of input and involvement available to the public.

- **Fact sheets** are being prepared and distributed to a wide-reaching distribution list to inform the public as the project progresses.
- **Workshops** are being held at critical points in the process to receive input on tasks recently completed and on recommendations regarding the next step in each task
- **Working groups** will be established for input on the selection of alternatives and ultimately the screening and selection of sites for analysis in the EIS. These groups will also be actively involved in providing input and recommendations to the information gathered for the EIS. These groups will include representatives from EPA, the Corps, other federal, state and local agencies, and members of the public who volunteer and commit to rolling up their sleeves in resolving critical issues associated with key decisions as the EIS process continues.



Dredging Needs Inventory

The dredging needs inventory is important to characterize both the volume and quality of dredged material in need of disposal over the next 20 years. This inventory will address historic trends and will project future volumes. A review of historic projects has been initiated and an assessment of future volumes will be conducted based on interviews with harbor users within the coastal communities of LIS. Each harbor in Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island (east to Point Judith) will be included in the analysis. Data/projections will be described by source (e.g. federal civil works, other federal, state and municipal, and private) with assumptions made as to the anticipated quality of the material and suitability for alternative disposal sites/methods.

Alternatives

As required by NEPA, the EPA and the Corps will evaluate the existing disposal sites, and additional alternatives including other open water disposal sites, other types of dredged material disposal and management, and the no action alternative. Specifically, four types of disposal alternatives are under consideration: open water disposal; beneficial reuse; upland disposal; and treatment technologies. Also considered will be the "no action" (or "no designation") alternative.

The alternatives section of the EIS will discuss and contrast alternative disposal sites and methods, including those which are not considered reasonable or feasible. Different types of disposal (e.g. containment islands, nearshore sites, borrow pits, confined aquatic disposal sites, and beach nourishment) will be evaluated and a matrix prepared comparing benefits, impacts and costs of each. Each alternative site resulting from the screening process will be evaluated and ultimately ranked based on environmental factors, economic feasibility and engineering feasibility.

Affected Environment

The affected environment is defined as the Zone of Siting Feasibility (ZSF). Since the October 1999 workshops, the ZSF has been defined for each of the alternative disposal options.

- **Open Water Disposal** - From Hell's Gate eastward through LIS, to Fishers Island, Gardiners Bay, Peconic Bay, the waters adjacent to Montauk, NY, to Block Island Sound as far east as Point Judith, RI.

- **Upland Disposal** - All lands within the following political jurisdictions:
 - ❖ New York - Westchester, Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, Suffolk and Nassau counties
 - ❖ Connecticut - All counties in the state
 - ❖ Rhode Island - Washington county
- **Beneficial Uses** - The area within both the Open Water Disposal ZSF and the Upland Disposal ZSF

The ZSF for Confined Disposal Facilities (CDF) is a subset of the beneficial use areas and includes the open waters of LIS and upland areas to the inland boundary of the states' respective coastal zones.

For each of the ZSF's, biological, physical, chemical, socioeconomic and cultural resources will be described. Existing data will be used as well as information gathered through field investigations and interviews. A general section will be included in the EIS that describes the setting for the entire LIS region. For the existing and alternative open water sites, the description will be specific to each candidate disposal site. For upland and beneficial use sites, a general setting description will be followed by a description of the range of sites considered. The following is a list of topics to be addressed in the section describing the **entire LIS region**.

- **Physical setting:** water quality, geology, meteorology, physical oceanography
- **Biological resources:** plankton, benthos, fish and shellfish, wildlife, endangered and threatened species
- **Socioeconomic resources:** general fishing activities, shipping/navigation, beaches, parks/natural areas, historic and archaeological resources, other human uses (swimming, recreation diving, cable pipeline locations, military, mining activities).

For the existing and alternative **open water sites**, the following resources will be described.

- **Physical setting:** water quality, sediment quality, side scan sonar data, bathymetry, current speed and direction
- **Biological resources:** benthos, fish, shellfish and fishing activities
- **Socioeconomic resources:** other human uses, including potential for historic shipwrecks.